

Tips for Parents as Kids Go Back to School



- 1. Get Organized.** A new school year means new stuff: clothes, supplies, books to read, sports to try. Sit down with your child and review all the items that are needed before school starts. Making sure your child is well equipped for the first day of school will make the transition from summer to school much easier.
- 2. Preview the School Year.** What is your child excited about this year? Are there things they are nervous about? What are their goals – academic, athletic or extracurricular? What are your expectations for your child? Make sure your child knows that you are there to help them whenever needed in whatever situation. Even if you think they already know this, remind them.
- 3. Create a Positive Studying Environment.** Talk with your child to choose a regular time each day that is dedicated to studying. Routines are very beneficial to children. Find the best study spot for your child – a quiet, well lit room free of distractions is ideal. And be sure to show your interest in their schoolwork. Talk about assignments and books they are reading.
- 4. Make the Most of Mealtimes.** Research by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University consistently finds that the more often children eat dinner with their families, the less likely they are to smoke, drink or use drugs. The conversations that go hand-in-hand with dinner will help you learn more about your children's lives and better understand the challenges they face.
- 5. Build an Open Relationship with Your Child's Teacher.** While teachers do not need to know every minute detail of your child's life, sharing major life events with teachers can help them understand how your child behaves in school. An exciting upcoming vacation, moving to a new house or the death of a pet can all effect how your child behaves in school. The more the teacher knows, the more they can help and the more they can alert you when your child's behavior is out of the ordinary.
- 6. Talk About Drugs and Alcohol.** It's never too soon to begin talking with your child about the perils of drug and alcohol abuse. Studies have shown that involved parents are the top deterrent to teen drug and alcohol use.
- 7. Discuss the Realities of Peer Pressure.** Have an open conversation – and continue to do so on a regular basis with your child about what peer pressures they have experienced and provide tips to handle them.

Supplied by the Barrington Substance Abuse Task Force
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